

Swingline

SWINGLINE #15 is brought to you again this month by Joyce Katz, 59 Livingston St., Apt.6-B, Brooklyn, NY 11201, for the 17th mlg. of APA, due on July 14, 1973. Gee, Gang, I'm sorry to have missed last mailing, especially since there's been so much good stuff in the last few mailings. I'd really like to believe that I'm going to go back and comment on everything I missed; but, I guess that would be straining credibility a bit far.

What's been happening since last we met? -- Well..I've almost recovered from my attack of goldrums, but at the time of the last mailing I hand't...and (more significantly) hadn't recovered from the labors connected with my office move to new quarters. (Much nicer, thank you, and I like it a lot...but it sure was a job getting settled in to the new place...and it klutzed up my participation in last mlg.)

Since fandom, for us this summer, seems to be decreased to about once-a-week encounters with others, we've been largely occupying our time with non-fannish pursuits...and I guess that uppermost in this line has been our increasing interest in games. Of course Arnie is still heavily involved with the sports-game group...but, in the last few months he's been teaching me to play various conflict simulation games. I'm still not carried away by them...and definitely am not very good at them.. but my interest in war gaming has been increasing, and I suppose my skill will soon follow suit. Last weekend we attended a gaming convention here in NYC; we only stayed a couple or three hours..long enough to buy a new selection of games and watch some people playing "Star War" on television sets..but it was interesting. I had been curious about what kind of people would be involved: well, there were a large number of very straight short-haired guys ... and a surprising number of normal counter-culture people...and very few in between. It reminded me more than anything of an sf convention in 1967-68, but much smaller...and much more serious. -- I mention this because I had expected that the convention would be dominated by neo-facist types exclusively..and though there were a few, it was nice to find that there was more to it than that.

War gaming is actually enjoying quite a flurry of interest in Brooklyn: Bill & Charlene have expressed a little interest, and actually played a game or two; Ross has indicated that he at least likes the idea, if not the reality of the games.

Somehow, despite the fact that this is, for us, a very laid-back period in fandom, we've continued to consider fandom our primary base, where friendships are concerned, and although we've been developing quite a number of outside contacts, find ourselves hoping that eventually NY fandom will rise again. It's always a little sad (as more than one of us in this group have had opportunity to observe) when good scene dissolves into a more barren one. But--what the hell; these things happen from time to time, and it always seems to come right in the end. There are already signs of an improvement, happily.

OO I've decided to vote no on the Glicksohns. I'm sorry, Arnie: I don't like to vote against someone you nominated. But, as we've discussed privately and as has been written about in apa, I just don't think he'd be a good member. Special apologies to you, Grant; my delay in voting has been largely due to your eloquent plea on his behalf (hope someday to have a friend who'd stick his neck out as far for me as you have for Mike..) but my final decision was actually prompted by John, whose reasons for voting yes were precisely my reasons for voting no. I do think apa is a good group, "jelled" if you like to think of it that way. And I'm not anxious to see apa become "just another fannish apa" as John indicates he wouldn't mind. Interesting that both of us should see Mike's entrance into apa as a tendency in that direction.

TED I'm croggled, Ted, at your telling me that I "attend conventions the wrong way" and by your announcement that I generally "stay in.(my) room and wait for people to visit me". That from someone who doesn't even show up at a con until 4 or 5 in the evening. Unfortunately, Ted, you're mistaken: I don't confine my convention attendance only to the evening, as you do, and the events of the day do have bearing on my opinion of the con. Ironic that you should suggest my problem with Lunacon was from too little mingling, when in fact the reverse is much closer to the truth, and there were too few people there that I actually wanted to mingle with. -- We'll probably try to go to Phillycon, but it seems pretty sure that we won't go to Torcon. As I said before, we'll probably end by regretting that we didn't go. But right now, the reality of the matter is that it'll be better for our fannish future if we regret missing Tordon than if we went and regretted our attendance. I can't afford that experience again this year, financially or emotionally.

Not that it makes much difference, but just to set the record straight, you are mistaken about what happened when Sandi became mailer for APA and changed its name to Apasembly. First off, Arnie didn't "kill off" the group; a lengthy period of him being mailer had passed, and he became tired of the job so asked for a volunteer to take over. He asked several people before Sandi volunteered. (I know, for example, that he asked Ray and I to take over...but we were pretty busy doing something else at the time.) He gave all the apa supplies, money, mailing lables, etc. to Sandi together with the mailing, already collated, stapled together, in envelopes ready to be mailed....which is a far cry from what you apparently thought.

Of an actual matter of fact, what really happened was that, with the next mailing (and remember that group was on a bi-weekly schedule) Sandi announced (1) page requirements; (2) called for dues; and (3) the induction of some new members who had been specifically declined by an earlier balloting. I know that I arrived in NY and saw Sandi the following weekend only to be told that unless I came up with pages and dues for the next mlg., I was out. Frankly, I was in no condition to deal with that ultimatum (Ray and I had just separated) and just let it pass. Others to drop out in front of that set of rules were Arnie, the Browns, the Carrs...and I believe Steve Stiles, and of course, Ray. Memory fogs, but that may have been when Bob Lichtman dropped, too. Sandi's rules by fiat were apparently the cause of a massive turn-over of membership, as well as the change in character of the apa.

One of the motivating factors of my life has come to be the desire to hear your stereo. Each time you write about the system, you've added something new to it; someday I really want to experience it.

True words you said to Lesleigh..attraction does seem to occur anytime that it's possible. Funny thing is, the world, and our social patterns, seem to be set up as if the reverse were the case, and as if sexual attraction was an infrequent thing that only happened now and then. And that, I think, is what causes so many of the emotional and social problems. A simple cultural realization that sexual attraction is as common (and as likely) as any of our other human hungers, would do much toward relieving the guilts and frustrations of many tormented types: if they could just see that an Appetite for a sexually attractive acquaintance is no more heinous than an appetite for a good-looking piece of chocolate creme pie, and no more reason for such soul-castigations as we sometimes put ourselves through. The "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ass" commandment is not really humanly possible to adhere to. It would have been better for the world if the rule had read that thou shalt not do anything about it...that at least is in our control. (Of course, we liberal souls can give great argument that there's not so very much wrong with doing something about our appetites; but that, after all, is a moral question, and not really as big a cause of question as the basic coveting.)

Your Ardis Waters story was wonderful...I had heard parts of it, but not in its Fullness. --- I was in a drug apa in the late 60's, with Evers, Donaho..maybe the Brown's were in it too, but if so they must have been inactive. It wasn't much, tho...everyone was being super-cautious, and the apa folded pretty promptly, after only a few sparse mailings. Later Evers founded others which were probably more interesting; but, by that time dope had become such a way of life, that it seemed silly to belong to an apa devoted to it. Still, shop-talking dope is always fun, and for that purpose alone, I was sorry that the one I was in never really got off the ground.

I suppose that the east coast swingers are more of a bother to me precisely for the reasons that they aren't any worry to you: through circumstance, I seem to be more exposed to them. By the same token, my exposure to the intrigues of the west coast are so seldom that they don't even cross my mind, much less to worry about. Basically we're saying the same thing; that no one's sexual adventures need be a bother to anyone else unless one person's tastes (or lack of it) are pushed off on someone else. And imposition of one person's will on another is always messy, whether it's about sex or whatever. And, obviously, we all have our own Lines we don't want to cross. I, for example, have great distrust and dislike for the "free-dating" concept which is found acceptable by almost everyone I know....whether it involves sex or not, a free-dating situation is one that I recognize I would be endangered by. You, on the other hand, indicate that you feel distressed by the concept of someone else lusting after your wife. (By contrast, I'd feel less endangered in someone else's bed than I would sitting over dinner in some restaurant with someone else, or traipsing through the art museum with someone other than Arnie.)

I like what you say about augmented sex being an extension of your relationship with Robin and not an alternative. That's the sanest statement I've heard on the subject for a while.

Yeah. As I've said before, the drug experience and the sex experience are very similar. Done properly, a very pleasant sensory overload can take place with either one...but, by and large, I think I prefer good sex to good acid..and I definitely prefer good sex to bad acid. Wasn't it Robin who made the observation, a few migs back, that she thought sexual adventures might be the best? She's right, you know...

TERRY It was nice to see you when you were in NY...I enjoyed it a lot, but was sorry you had to leave so abruptly, and hope you'll have a chance to come back to the city again before long.

Rather than resenting it, when someone points out to me that my ideals might change later on in the development of my life, I've frequently been relieved to know that what I was experiencing wasn't necessarily the be-all of my existence. I believe in living every "phase" of my life as fully and as committedly as possible, even while recognizing that something totally different may lie ahead of me.

Most of us experience several life styles, and don't remain fixed forever in the same pattern -- this is one of the Realities of life. I guess maybe the best thing I could have been told as a child was something that I didn't learn: that there are numerous valid life styles, and it wouldn't be wrong for me to move from one to another. I've mentioned before that I was raised in an extremely conservative environment, in which anyone different was automatically Wrong. Oh, I knew that there were people who didn't go to bed at nine pm and rise at seven, and go to services on Sunday morning and read the papers on Sunday afternoon...but I also knew that they were Wrong. And, probably most significant, I knew that if I slipped out of any of these Righteous Ways, I would be Lost. Maybe the most traumatic piece of knowledge I ever had to learn was that it really was ok for me to stay up til eleven. -- ok, ok..I oversimplify. But not by all that much. The point remains that if I had known that life wasn't only One Way, the early years of my first marriage would have been much less hindered by struggles to reconcile my background to the different lifestyle I had married into. Later on, when that particular world crumbled and I found another world to live within, I still believed there was only One Way; that the previous lifestyles I had experienced were (obviously since they had led me into disappointments) erroneous, and that the more soulful existence that comforted me at that time was the obviously correct One Way. -- And, of course, the real crux of the matter is that there isn't just One Way. Also (throwing in my two bits in response to the question you asked Ted) there isn't just One Burning Question nor just One Answer.

FRANK You know, it's a funny thing, but Arnie has this friend named Joe who was in Vietnam and still not straightened out from it, who flipped out about a month ago, must have been about the same time as your Joe. Our Joe's last name is Krakowski or something like that...but he seemed less inflicted by the crazies than by massive depression. He was over one evening and we had a pretty long conversation with him in which it was evident that he was really needing Help; he was about ready to drop out of the group (he's in Arnie's baseball league) and indicated that he was considering dropping all his mundane associates, too, all in a clean sweep. But, it was pretty clear that was he was really asking for was for us to reassure him that he'd still be welcome in our house if he had to have professional help. (I had about forgotten how frightened some people are by the whole concept of professional psychiatric help--I thought it was pretty pathetic that someone should feel, as Joedid, that he'd probably have to lose all his friends and associates if he gave up and saw a doctor.) -- He let us know, a few days later, that he had committed himself for psychiatric help in a V.A. hospital in New Jersey -- and, from what we hear from him since then, he's going to be In for a while. When we read your story about your friend Joe, we wondered a lot at the coincident, and then decided it couldn't possibly be the same guy. Could it? == Hey: come to see us, won't you?

JOHN In view of the low-key disagreements you and I have been having lately, I think I should say something right out in front. Mind, I think you know this...but when you're disagreeing with someone, it's always a real good thing to know exactly where your feet are resting. And, too, maybe it's a good idea to let everyone else in apa know where I stand, so they'll know how much importance to attach to your and my sparring. Basically, Johnny, when my tribal circles got drawn a bunch of years ago, you were one of the people very definitely on the inside. And, it would take a hell of a lot more disagreeing than we've had to date before that would cease to be the truth. Sometimes you irritate the life out of me..as I'm sure I do you...but that's as much a part of any friendship as the good aspects. Sometimes your head gets turned some way that I think is wrong...I know the reverse of that statement is true too. Sometimes you get off on a tangent that I find difficult to coexist with...and I'm aware that you sometimes think that what I'm in to is wasteful and wrong. But..I wouldn't want you to lose sight of the fact that, so far as I'm concerned, you're ok...even when I think you're impossible.

In our recent exchanges, I've got the impression that you feel I'm Wasting My Life; that my Practical side has submerged my "non-rational" side...and, thereby rendered my life near to worthless. You seem to think that I am somehow worsened by the lack of freedom and mobility that is brought about by stable employment, home, etc. On the other hand, I'll admit that I hold almost the same set of fears about you: that your lack of direction will make you ineffectual; that your financial independence makes you overly cavalier about the mundane worries that most of the rest of us have to cope with. I am particularly distressed at the attitude I think you hold, that people who are into metaphysics and philosophy and psychological confrontations are somehow superior to the rest of the world. It makes me pretty unhappy that you seem to feel that, since I'm not overtly engaged in Heavy Conversations, most of the time, that my life is thereby, by definition, Shallow. I guess what I would most like to see you come to realise (and I know that you know this; you just don't yet believe it) is that everyone is equally alive....that people gravitate (if given the socio-economic-philosophic, etc. freedom to do so) into what most fills their needs. Some people need psychological confrontations, or non-mechanical views, or spiritualistic approaches to life, and it's right and good and proper for them to fill those needs. Some people never have any need whatsoever for that type of thing. Most people need a balanced mixture between the mundane and the sublime..if you want to call it that. Meatloaf, John, is neither better nor worse than mashed potatoes. They are both food, and they are both valid. And it's particularly nice when you can have a little of both. Just because I'm less given to sitting in corners crying, or pleading desperately for some kind of help, than I was at one time in my life, does not indicate that I'm a worse person. At the stage of your and my arguments that hurts me the worst, you give me the impression that you liked me a hell of a lot better when I was miserable.

A slight change in direction; I have a question. If you found the ultimate truth, or became the Best You it was possible to be, or answered your Ultimate Question (or fulfilled whatever goal you happen to be seeking with your non-rational half): then what would you do? -- I'm not implying that I've cornered the market on happiness, or that I've attained godhood, or that I know any ultimate answers that would work for anyone else. Nothing like that. But, being pretty happy with life these days, with no burning desires for Escape or needs that seem impossible to fulfill, the thing I have to decide is the purely mundane question of What Next. And, so far it's been the relatively quiet, contented matter of just living one day to the next, comfortably, contentedly, and mundanely. Is this so bad? Does the fact that I'm being relatively quiet, with little Heaviness, mean to you that I'm only "half alive" (the phrase you used, as I recall.) If you think that (and I know you don't; I know the words were hastily spoken before you fully thought out the question) you're wrong. All I'm doing is exactly what you're doing: fulfilling, to the best of my ability, my needs. That's what almost everyone is doing, John. And, the fact that everyone has different needs is the explanation of why different people choose different paths at different times of their life.

Which may be Heavy...but I'll bet you'll agree. Now, go back and re-read my first paragraph, John...cause I don't want you to lose sight of what your and my relationship really is.

